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Q and A on Job Market for Science, Engineering

In Washington, a city of experts, the acknowledged authority on the ups and downs and dynamics of scientific training and employment is Betty M. Vetter, head of staff of the Scientific Manpower Commission since 1963. The Commission is operated by a consortium of 15 scholarly organizations, including the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Chemical Society, the American Psychological Association, and the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology. Ms. Vetter, who holds the title of Executive Director, is editor of the Commission's monthly Scientific, Engineering, Technical Manpower Comments, *and is the author of scores of papers and reports. The following is from a conversation with SGR August 16, edited by SGR for brevity and clarity.—DSG*

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SGR: Has computer science been the great sponge for other fields with job shortages?

Vetter: To some degree, it certainly is true for physics. It's true for some of the engineers. There's a new field that nobody really names. You can't major in it, or I don't think you can anywhere. And yet, if you look in the newspapers, that's what everybody is looking for. And that's software engineering. Now, the software engineer is really an engineer with a computer-science basis, or vice versa. There would be a fairly large common core of courses and knowledge that the electronic engineer and the computer scientist would share. And it is that apparent combination that is in such demand. Yet, it is not a degree field. You don't major in computer software.

Another Senior Administrator Is Leaving NSF—Page 6

SGR: Are universities responding to this development?

Vetter: I think the problem at universities in both engineering and computer science is the same. There have been faculty shortages that continue to be severe, for a number of reasons. As these fields showed better and better opportunities, more and more kids wanted to take them. And in computer science, not only the kids who wanted to major, but also the kids who wanted to major in anything else saw this as an essential job skill. They wanted the course work, too. There was some shortage, and there still is, of hardware to work on, and that's true both in engineering and computer science. I don't think it's that the universities are unaware of the possibility of new majors that combine the things needed to really go ahead in the high-tech areas. It's that they can hardly keep up with what they're doing at the moment. That's a political situation, in addition to being other kinds of situations.

SGR: Political?

Vetter: Yes. It's difficult in any academic institution for anybody to declare that one field is more important than another. And that's true when it comes to deciding whether you pay all the fields the same salary for the same rank, or whether indeed you do follow the law of supply and demand, and you pay what's required. But it seems to say that engineering or computer science is more important than philosophy, if you make that salary differentiation. The same thing happens if you try laying off faculty or you find that philosophy doesn't have many majors in it and there are people

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In Brief

Coming September 13, another commission-generated report on education, but this one has an odd genesis and it may prove embarrassing to the Reagan Administration. It's the report of the Commission on Precollege Education in Mathematics, Science and Technology, a National Science Foundation offshoot established last year to hush protests about cuts in NSF's education budget. The Chairman, William T. Coleman Jr., a leading civil rights activist and former Secretary of Transportation, has taken the job seriously, and has speeded up release of the report by a month.

Meanwhile, the Administration—now quiet about its pre- and post-election campaign commitments to abolish the Department of Education—will be staging another event to demonstrate that it cares about schooling: A White House ceremony, October 19, at which Mr. Reagan will present to 100 teachers the newly established Presidential Awards for Excellence in Science and Mathematics Teaching.

Space is becoming another area of political competition as election year approaches. Senator John Glenn (D-Ohio) is the natural champion for a big space program, including a manned space station. President Reagan is expected to match him in a speech scheduled for around mid-September.

Medical School Enrollments Remain Near Record High

With the long-discussed doctor glut a reality rather than an ambiguous prophecy in quite a few parts of the country, supply-and-demand theory would suggest a decline in the tide of medical school enrollments. It works that way in engineering, physics, and other technically oriented professions. But medicine goes its own way in manpower as in many other matters—so much so, in fact, that the next few years are likely to see an actual increase in the number of newly minted physicians arriving in the job market.

Two key factors underly the prodigious output of physicians: The first is the enormous expansion of the medical-education system over the past 15 years, from 95 MD-granting schools with 34,500 students in 1968 to 127 schools with a record 66,700 students last year. (Schools of osteopathy, which now number 15, have experienced similar growth, with last year's graduates totaling 1117—a doubling in 10 years.) The second factor is the recent surge in female enrollments—from 11 percent of the total in 1970 to nearly 33 percent last year. As a result, the total number of applicants to the MD schools, though down from the 1974 peak of 42,624, has held fairly steady over the past five years—36,636 in 1978, 35,730 in 1982. And that's in the face of glut warnings, costlier tuition and loans, and ominous predictions about physician incomes.

But what about the crucial matter of student quality? Richard R. Randlett, Director of Student Services at the Association of American Medical Colleges, points out that, in the aggregate, there is still an overabundance of qualified applicants in quest of those student slots. Thus, though the applicant pool has shrunk a bit, the national applicant/acceptance ratio has remained at 2.1/1 for the past four years. In only 16 of the past 36 years was a higher proportion of applicants turned away. Average scores on the Medical College Admissions Test actually edged up a bit in most categories between 1978 and 1982.

A look at student input and graduate output in recent years makes it perfectly clear that, glut or no glut, the gusher of new MDs is destined to continue at least near to the end of this decade. The 16,613 applicants admitted in 1978 translated into 15,985 graduates in 1982. Last year, with five relatively new schools yet to reach maximum class size, first-year enrollments totaled 17,254, a mere 56 students below the all-time peak, set the year before. Several state schools have reduced incoming-class sizes a bit in response to cost-cutting pressures from their legislatures, but the overall effect has been slight.

With the nation's garden spots and high-tech medical areas generally full up with physicians, where are the new opportunities? According to one longtime observer of medical manpower trends, William Schwartz, Professor of Medicine at Tufts University, a dispersal is actually taking place to under-served areas that were previously considered undesirable. "When you come right down to it," he says, "doctors behave just like gas stations in picking locations."

...Physics Took Lead in Producing Oversupply

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knocking on the doors of the computer-science department. Do you close down philosophy? I don't think many academic institutions have done that, but it means that you've got to continue to maintain a faculty and opportunities in fields which the students have not seen in recent years as being that rewarding.

SGR: What's happening to manpower supply and demand in the major disciplines?

Vetter: Over the past several years, if you discount the ups and downs that come with recessions, the demand has been increasing at about the rate that supply has been increasing in most of the fields of engineering. In many of the science fields, the oversupply started fairly early. In physics, for example, the oversupply was already quite apparent by 1970.

SGR: How much of an oversupply?

Vetter: About one-fourth of the PhD class was not able to find the kinds of jobs that one always assumed a physics PhD could find. The physics population was the forerunner. Then it started happening to others. For those fields where the academic marketplace is the largest marketplace for the PhD, the hardship is greater. For areas like chemistry, that utilize people at three degree levels and utilize them in all the employment sectors, then despite ups and downs, chemistry does indeed keep going fairly well.

SGR: Has anyone tracked what happened to those PhD physicists who couldn't do the kind of physics they wanted to do?

Vetter: No, I don't think so, though there's been some looking at the question. One of the interesting things is that the enrollments and the degrees at all levels have been dropping since 1970 in physics; they apparently are now down to about the right supply-

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...Mathematicians Turn to Computer Sciences

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demand balance, except that someplace out there, there are a whole lot of physics graduates from previous years who never got into what it was they thought they wanted at the time. Whether they are happily situated doing something else, or are still indeed in the job market for physics, I don't know.

SGR: What's happened in mathematics?

Vetter: That's an oddball group. We should be having, and sometimes do seem to be, problems in placing math graduates. And yet, we don't really, because although the demand for mathematics graduates is down and has been going down, the demand for computer science graduates is up and going up. And with the exception of those math graduates who came out in the pure state of not having sullied their hands with any applied applications, the math majors, by and large, find their nook someplace in the computer sciences.

SGR: Are today's students especially sensitive to the job market?

Vetter: This generation of college students has become very aware of the job-opportunities problem. And although they may not know the statistics that say that one out of four of them will not find a job that previously required a college education, or was even wanted by a college graduate, they do know that it's a hard thing to get a job out there, and particularly the kind of job they want. So, they appear to be working harder to come out in the top levels of their classes. They certainly appear to be trying to take fields that are in demand. And that's one of the reasons for the great runs into engineering and computer science.

SGR: Does that raise the old problem of student enrollments and job opportunities being out of sync?

Vetter: They always lag in matches, principally because the student making the decision is at least four years ahead of the point at which he will face the job market. Sometimes he's as much as 10 years ahead. The job market will have changed—that's the only thing we can be sure of. He also cannot anticipate how many other people will follow the same path for the same reason that he does, which, in itself, can change the outcome. So, in engineering, it seems inevitable, because it's been happening as long as we have statistics. We get on an upslope in enrollments, and therefore degrees. Then suddenly you get a year like this year, when the demand for engineers is still high relative to other kinds of things, but there's a very large drop-off in the number of job offers made, which is the only set of data we have.

SGR: How large a drop-off?

Vetter: Approximately 25 percent in engineering, with some fields, of course, being far worse off than others. The electrical engineers are still pretty well in demand, although, again, there's a drop-off in the number of offers. Last year, from this set of companies [referring to a report of the College Placement Council] it was 9900; it dropped down to 8200 this year, even in that very high-demand field. But in chemical engineering, look at the drop: 4000 to 1000. Chem engineering had been doing great—tops or second in the salary structure all along. Kids had been pouring into chem engineering. Suddenly, the market seems to have dropped out. Well, you'll get a story in the *New York Times,* or elsewhere, and it will be on the front page, because it's unusual, when one of those chem engineering graduates who couldn't find a job at the end of the year took a job driving a cab in New York City for the summer. And enrollments will fall off 25 percent. That will affect the market 4 years later. If you run the numbers back, you always see the bachelors' degrees running 4 years behind the lag. And you see it more in engineering than you do in other fields, because engineering is the one where the typical entry level is a bachelor's degree. On the others, you wait just a little longer to get there.

SGR: Have the unsuccessful job hunters of previous years been absorbed into the job market?

Vetter: They almost always have been, no matter what. In years where they don't have a job by the time they graduate, this seems bad to kids, because they are accustomed to having a choice of 4 offers before they graduate. It is the experience of the past that almost all of them are placed within 6 months of graduation, one

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...High Salaries Lure BS Engineers to Industry

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way or another.

SGR: In jobs related to engineering?

Vetter: Usually. Some of them decide to go on to graduate school. But that's been one of the problems. The demand at the baccalaureate was so high that the best kids were taking these fantastic jobs that started them out at the end of a bachelor's degree at $30,000 a year. They didn't go on to graduate school, and we were not getting the PhDs that we need to have. In an ideal world, you would hope that the very best academically would be the ones who would go on for the top-degree training. In part that was because the salary offers for an assistant professor were just about equal to the salary offered by industry to the brand new [engineering] bachelor's degree. In addition to the 5 or 6 years of foregone income while getting the degree, and in addition to the fact that he has to pay tuition, or living costs, at any rate.

SGR: What's been the effect on teaching staffs?

Vetter: We're having lots of problems. One serious problem is the proportion of foreign nationals who are coming out of the PhD programs, because we don't have enough US PhDs who want the academic jobs. So, we're hiring foreign graduates. Whether that's good or bad from a political point of view doesn't matter to me. But it has one serious problem to it, and that is that many of them don't speak English very well. It's difficult for engineering students who are trying to catch onto a fairly complex subject, if they can't understand what's being said. And the teacher often doesn't understand them.

SGR: What's the proportion of foreigners in the

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Average Monthly Salary Offers for Bachelor Candidates

	Men				Women			
	Number of Offers		Average $ Offers		Number of Offers		Average $ Offers	
By Curriculum For All Types of Employers	July 1983	July 1982	July 1983	July 1982	July 1983	July 1982	July 1983	July 1982
Business								
Accounting	3,339	5,009	$1,567	$1,543	2,279	3,212	$1,561	$1,547
Business—General (incl. Mgmt.)	2,043	2,745	1,495	1,496	1,229	1,430	1,472	1,440
Marketing and Distribution	895	1,001	1,446	1,412	562	742	1,355	1,314
Humanities and Social Sciences								
Humanities	288	273	1,457	1,362	427	378	1,328	1,227
Economics[1]	369	389	1,588	1,579	208	229	1,593	1,482
Other Social Sciences	360	416	1,427	1,375	450	483	1,234	1,209
Engineering								
Aeronautical	380	487	2,008	1,973	59	66	1,981	1,972
Chemical	779	2,969	2,222	2,253	377	1,017	2,238	2,263
Civil (incl. Construction, Sanitary and Transportation Engrg.)	700	1,983	1,865	1,924	192	343	1,881	1,930
Electrical (incl. Computer Engrg.)	7,239	8,945	2,128	2,062	1,046	1,031	2,132	2,079
Geological	28	259	2,049	2,254	7	52	2,250	2,250
Industrial	532	1,164	2,031	2,023	309	480	2,078	2,024
Mechanical	3,372	6,603	2,095	2,096	511	735	2,105	2,113
Metallurgical (incl. Metallurgy and Ceramic Engrg.)	199	417	2,148	2,100	78	102	2,142	2,129
Mining	30	151	2,041	2,113	†	5	†	2,139
Nuclear (incl. Engrg. Physics)	98	209	2,074	2,028	16	35	2,106	2,102
Petroleum	245	965	2,569	2,542	62	125	2,565	2,518
Engineering Technology	595	1,041	2,007	1,962	29	64	1,981	1,884
Sciences								
Agricultural Sciences	247	385	1,390	1,422	50	84	1,298	1,249
Biological Sciences	61	87	1,492	1,415	88	82	1,369	1,332
Chemistry	77	163	1,741	1,747	70	99	1,681	1,757
Computer Science	1,578	2,017	1,960	1,907	994	1,210	1,911	1,909
Health (Medical) Professions	57	64	1,733	1,722	366	375	1,560	1,453
Mathematics	259	377	1,824	1,794	258	331	1,774	1,757
Other Physical & Earth Sciences	120	372	1,802	2,006	47	89	1,603	1,871
	23,890	38,491			9,714	12,799		

SOURCE: College Placement Council [1]Includes economics programs with both business and social science orientation. †No offers reported.

...Poor Market for Biology Degree Holders

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latest class of engineering PhDs?

Vetter: In one recent class, the proportion of US citizens was 46.2 percent. Some, of course, are eligible for citizenship, and some may have grown up with English.

SGR: Is there sign of a change in the teacher shortage?

Vetter: Yes. A number of things have been done, largely by industry. A lot of money has been put into it. A lot of the things have been objected to by the non-engineering parts of the universities where they've happened. Salary supplements are being paid. Fairly cushy consulting jobs and a number of fellowships are being offered through industry for bright young people to go back and finish their PhDs. In some cases, industry is paying all the expenses. They'll hire the brightest kid in the class—Bells labs has, of course, done this for years—and send him back to school for 5 years. And there are consortia of companies getting together on this.

SGR: Will the decline in enrollments ease the teaching shortage?

Vetter: If they genuinely decline. You can have a decline in enrollments and have fewer English students, and still not decline very far in engineering—if engineering continues in high demand. This year's drop-off in offers may possibly have been atypical, based on the fact that university recruiting occurred at a time in the year when we had not yet started pulling into what is now said to be the economic recovery—so that it was just a little too late for this year's class. On the other hand, if this year's recovery is genuine and continuing, then next year's class will be fine, in which case we'll have a dip, but it won't be a big one, in the engineering enrollments.

SGR: How have the life sciences been affected?

Vetter: The life sciences have been overcrowded for a long time. The life sciences, like engineering, are highly fragmented, and yet we still do studies in engineering manpower that manage to cope with the fragmentation and still keep track of the supply and demand. That's because a lot of people care about the engineering situation. But in the life sciences, there really isn't any single organization that takes a similar look. NSF picks them up in three vast groups: biological, agricultural, and medical. But within the biologicals, for example, you've got areas of fairly great shortage and tremendous surpluses.

SGR: What are some of them?

Vetter: We're short of anatomists.

SGR: Where?

Vetter: In medical schools, because of increased enrollments. People are needed to teach in the biomedical sciences; they seem to be in demand almost universally. The PhD in biology, which was the standard degree for somebody who was going to turn around and teach biology in college, is a drag on the market. There's no marketplace for these people. Colleges and universities aren't hiring them, and no one else is, either. There's a great demand for toxicologists. But relatively few people have that training. A lot of people set out to get into genes-studies programs. Like all high tech, the field certainly offers laboratory places right on the cutting edge for top notch microbiologists and other kinds of specialists. But the number of those needed is really very small. The problems that are occurring are in the abilities to make the transition from test tube to industrial scale. When it's done, it will not be by biologists, but by chem engineers and it's going to be monitored by lots of technicians.

SGR: How has this affected enrollments in biology?

Vetter: We still have tremendous numbers of kids going into biology. And I see this as particularly a problem for women, because it's been the acceptable science for women for a long time. And yet look at the salaries, which are a very good fringe indicator of demand. And you see two things. If you look at the biosciences and the ag sciences, and compare them with other fields, they're way down there at the bottom, almost as far down as the humanities and the social sciences [see table, page 4]. Then look across and you'll see that this is also where the widest variation occurs between men and women. The lower the salary being offered, the lower the demand; the lower the demand, the wider the gender gap. And that's true in every field at every degree level.

SGR: What rationale is offered for different starting salaries for newly graduated men and women?

Vetter: It's just that lower offers are made to women and women take them. It's as simple as that. In the fields where there's high demand, women are in high demand, mainly engineering. And you'll notice that in engineering salaries, men and women are right there together.

SGR: Do we lack important statistics about scientific and engineering manpower?

Vetter: Yes. There are a lot of numbers we'd like to have. The one that the [Scientific Manpower] Commission is pushing for right now, because we think it's vital, are data on science and math teachers in secondary education. We don't know how many there are. We don't know what their qualifications are. We don't know what proportion are teaching without ever having had a single course in their subjects. Although

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Head of Engineering Directorate Leaving NSF

The list of senior vacancies at the National Science Foundation lengthened again last week when the last remaining chief of NSF's four major disciplinary directorates, Jack T. Sanderson, Assistant Director for Engineering, left for an industrial job.

Sanderson, founding head of the now-$160-million-a-year directorate when it was established in 1981, left on two weeks' notice for ITT, in New York City, where he will be Director of Technology Utilization. The pay is said to be around double the $67,200 he received at NSF.

Sanderson's departure adds an ironic twist to the regime of NSF Director Edward A. Knapp, who, upon taking office last November, clumsily ousted the Deputy Director and an Assistant Director on the grounds that "I needed my own team" (SGR Vol. XIII, No. 1). Another of the four assistant directors voluntarily left a few months later to fulfill a longstanding commitment to return to academe; another assistant directorship had been briefly held by Knapp before his promotion to Director.

Having spent all his previous career at the Los Alamos National Laboratory, Knapp readily acknowledged his inexperience with Washington's ways, and said he was eager to get seasoned help, though of his own choice, in running the Foundation. The difficulty is that the White House gets into the picture because, by statute, the Director, Deputy Director and three of the assistant directors are presidential appointees. And, as it turns out, the White House hasn't paid much attention to pleas from Knapp and his old friend George A. Keyworth II, Mr. Reagan's Science Adviser, for decisions on their short lists of candidates.

The leading prospects must, of course, be checked out in great detail to minimize the danger of Mr. Reagan's embracing some dissembling miscreant of whom he actually knows nothing. And, of course, there is the problem of candidates removing themselves from consideration as preferred moments for job changes come and go.

Keyworth is known to be furious at the White House Personnel office for its apparent indifference to the vacancies, not only because of the difficulty they're causing for his old Los Alamos friend Knapp, but also because the absence of action reflects poorly on the telling matter of his ability to receive good service from the White House bureaucracy. On several occasions over the past 6 months, aides to Keyworth have privately assured SGR that an appointment or two would be announced within a short time; we heard the same just the other day. But at this writing, the wait continues.

Meanwhile, all the vacancies are filled on an acting

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MANPOWER *(Continued from page 5)*

everybody agrees that there is a serious problem with a math and science teacher shortage in precollege education, nobody knows what's really there. How many classrooms in math are being taught by English teachers who got put in there because the English teachers have seniority and tenure? We don't know. Yet, even those few kids who are majoring in secondary science and math education sometimes can't find a job, because the schools are getting smaller and tenured teachers under most contracts can't be fired so that you can hire one in the right field.

SGR: What does the available information show on this subject?

Vetter: We know from one study that over half the teachers hired to teach science and math in 1980 were unqualified in those subjects. They didn't have enough science and math courses. Some didn't have any. We know there are a certain number of vacancies reported by principals and state systems, but in some cases, a vacancy is counted only if there is no warm body in front of the classroom. We don't know what that vacancy rate means, because nobody is counting it the same way.

SGR: Where are the growth areas, let's say for someone entering the job market 3 to 5 years from now?

Vetter: I'd say it would be the same as it has been for the last three or four years. I can't see any change in that. I'd say it's still in electrical and electronic engineering and in any area of computers, whether it's design, software, anything.

SGR: But isn't that going to be saturated by today's enrollments?

Vetter: I don't think so. First of all, there's a big world out there that still doesn't have its own home computers, to say nothing of all the businesses that still don't use them. Also, with the emphasis that we're now putting on computers in our educational system, 100 percent of the kids now in junior high or lower will come out with some kind of computer experience. As that happens, computers will become as common and necessary as television and bathrooms. By the time the market gets saturated, changes will have us trading in our Kaypros, or whatever, for new ones.

SGR: What else appears bright in the future?

Vetter: Teaching. It will be difficult for a few years, but we are already seeing an expansion for first graders. Next year's class will be bigger than last year's. So, we're starting on another cycle of up, and we may never hit that same down cycle again.

Two Senior Aides Quit OSTP for Industrial Jobs

High-level corporate jobs have lured away two senior staff members of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP).

Douglas Pewitt, Assistant Director for General Science, will leave OSTP in October to join Western Research as Corporate Vice President. Victor H. Reis, Assistant Director for National Security and Space, left on August 30 to join Science Applications, Inc., for what was described as a "senior corporate position."

Reis performed in the tradition of the inconspicuous public servant, but Pewitt, at ease with and accessible to press, came to be regarded as the *eminence grise* of the White House science-policy operation. Whether the reputation was deserved, is debatable, but he came across as vintage Reaganite—much more so, in fact, than his generally a-political boss, OSTP Director George A. Keyworth II.

The move to the corporate world is not unprecedented for upper-level science-policy officials. But with the Administration pushing hard for closer ties between industry and government-financed research, those with inside experience have become especially attractive to industry at this time. SGR hears that at least one other departure from the upper ranks is in the works.

A spokesman for OSTP said that successors for the two have not yet been chosen.

In Print

CBASSE Newsletter, 2-3-times-a-year publication of the Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education of the National Academy of Sciences, presents summaries of the Commission's latest reports; also lists studies in the works or just getting organized, with names of panelists and full-time staff included. (Subscriptions available without charge from David Goslin, Executive Director, CBASSE, 2101 Constitution Ave. Nw., Washington, DC 20418.)

Strategic and Critical Nonfuel Minerals: Problems and Policy Alternatives, report by the Congressional Budget Office, states that "Compared to the cost of acquiring and maintaining inventories [of minerals] or subsidizing production, research and development might prove inexpensive. If directed particularly toward those materials for which US reliance on foreign sources entails some vulnerability, it could reduce risks considerably, as it already has." (85 pages, limited number of copies available without charge from the Congressional Budget Office, US Congress, Washington, DC 20515; also for sale by the US Government Printing Office.)

Clarification

Egged on by some of our usually reliable, though ideologically feverish, contacts in elevated science-policy circles of the Reagan Administration, SGR (Vol. XIII, No. 12) compounded an already confusing situation concerning curious changes in next year's meeting schedule of the National Science Board, the policymaking body of the National Science Foundation, which could lose its Carter-appointed majority next May. We erred in stating that all the meetings were shifted from the customary third Thursdays and Fridays of each month. The one exception is the May meeting, which will be held on May 10-11, the second Thursday and Friday. The significance of the May dates is that a Reagan-appointed majority will come aboard on the 10th—if the White House gets around to appointing it on time, which it rarely ever has. If new appointees are not available on that date, the old Carter majority will be able to elect a chairman and vice chairman. Our sources angrily claimed such was the aim of the schedule shift. In response to an inquiry from SGR, the most senior available Board official, Vice Chairman Mary L. Good, assured us in June that the schedule we mistakenly described was unanimously approved and that "it's not a naive Board."

NSF *(Continued from page 6)*

basis, and, as far as can be learned, the Foundation is performing just as well as when it had a full complement of presidentially appointed, senatorially confirmed senior executives. The difference in performance is either non-existent or so unnoticeable that it invites wonder.—DSG

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Reagan Establishes Technology Medal

Ronald Reagan has invoked his ceremonial advantage in the political race to champion high technology by announcing the creation of a presidentially awarded National Technology Medal.

The medal, intended as an engineering counterpart to the now-and-then-awarded National Medal of Science, received statutory authorization 4 years ago, as part of the Stevenson-Wydler Innovation Act—one of the more interesting Congressional efforts to stir up American industry. Most features of that law of the land have been ignored by the Reagan Administration as liberal-motivated, misguided interventionism in industry. But as the pollsters have reported political advantage in science, technology, and related educational matters, Mr. Reagan has taken the cue.

The new medal, according to an announcement from George A. Keyworth II, the White House Science Adviser, shows that "the President is eager to recognize innovators in technology who have helped America compete successfully in the international marketplace and who have improved the well-being of the United States."

Like the Science Medal, the Technology Medal will carry no cash award; as many as 12 at a time may be awarded. Nominations will be by a committee organized by the Department of Commerce, the Secretary of which will make recommendations to the President. No date has been announced for the first award, but the timetable for selections is interesting. Nominations for the first batch will be accepted from September 1 to November 30, 1983. But "In future years," according to an announcement from Keyworth's office, "nominations will be open from May 1 to July 31." The reason for this, a member of his staff told SGR, is that the President intends to make an award this year. (Under the follow-up schedule, he, of course, could also make a pre-election award next year, but inquiries on that possibility are considered too cynical to merit serious response.)

The last time the White House showed interest in honoring technology was in election-year 1972, when Richard Nixon, in his embrace of technology, announced the creation of a series of $50,000 Presidential Prizes for Innovation. Winners were picked—how many was never revealed—and checks were actually written. But the awards, scheduled for presentation in the final weeks of the campaign, were never made. The reason was that most, if not all, of the winners were high-level corporate executives, and Mr. Nixon's campaign advisers did not think he would benefit politically from giving them $50,000 checks.

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